

My co-worker is so sympathetic.

Communication Styles



Getting Started

Check the communication styles that apply to you.

- domineering inquisitive sympathetic accommodating
 outspoken diplomatic passive other: _____

Reading & Discussions

1 Read the article below and get the main idea.

Communication Styles: How You Say It

One morning, while attending a staff meeting you feel that one of your co-workers is being too aggressive. Or after work one night, you are retelling the day's events to your partner, but sense that you're not being listened to—what is it that gives you such impressions?

Although *what* we say is no doubt important in conversation, *how* we say it often gives as much, or perhaps even more, information.

In research on how people communicate, the cross-cultural aspect has long been given significant focus. For example, it's often said that Japanese do not make as much eye contact as Westerners. Also, according to sociolinguist Edward Hall, North Americans tend to maintain a greater distance than Latin Americans when they talk to a stranger.

Another factor that has interested many researchers is gender. Examining videotaped

conversations between American, same-sex best friends, Deborah Tannen, another sociolinguist, found that women tended to have “their eyes anchored on each other's faces,” while men “looked elsewhere in the room, periodically glancing at each other.” Tannen has further argued that men talk to compete and thus challenge each other in conversation, whereas women talk to create intimacy and thus value rapport.

Some researchers, including Tannen, have attributed such gender divergence to patterns of socialization during childhood, while others have sought the answer in such fields as cerebral physiology or genetics.

Whether natured or nurtured is still open to discussion; however, it can be said that communication styles are multi-faceted and that understanding your own and others' styles might make you a better conversationalist.

Today's Discussion

Communication Styles

About the Topic

Communication styles can be simply defined as styles in which one communicates with others. These styles can include both verbal and nonverbal aspects. For example, the tone and volume of one's voice and frequent use of first names (e.g. *You're right, Kate.*) are verbal; while gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, physical contact/distance, postures and initiative-taking are nonverbal aspects of communication styles. Often combined with each other, they can convey certain messages to others: Lack of eye contact and a feeble voice could be combined, for example, to give an impression that you're not confident.

Helpful Vocabulary

To describe someone's communication styles, you can use expressions such as ... *is a good conversationalist*, ... *includes everyone in the conversation*, ... *leaves [himself/herself] out of the conversation*, ... *hears what [he/she] wants to hear*, ... *cuts people off*, ... *pries into other people's business*, ... *always sits on the fence*, ... *always butts in*. and *Having a conversation with [him/her] is like talking to a wall*.

I know someone who always butts in.

You can also use such adjectives as *aggressive*, *assertive*, *confrontational*, *decisive*, *diplomatic*, *passive-aggressive*, *domineering*, *indecisive*, *inquisitive*, *intimidating*, *overly agreeable*, *outspoken*, *persuasive*, *passive* and *sympathetic*.

I have a friend who's really diplomatic.

My co-worker is so sympathetic.



Discussion Tip

Conceding While Presenting Another Point

To concede while presenting another point, you can use the following expressions:

Maybe you're right, but ...
おっしゃる通りかもしれませんが、...

You may be right, but ...
おっしゃる通りかもしれませんが、...

I see your point, but ...
おっしゃりたいことはわかりますが、...

I know what you mean, but ...
おっしゃりたいことはわかりますが、...

I agree with you in a sense, although ...
ある意味賛成ですが、...

I [think/guess] you're right, but ...
おっしゃる通りだとは思いますが、...

That may be true, but ...
その通りかもしれませんが、...

Maybe you're right, but there could be individual variations.

I see your point, but I think people from Kansai are more aggressive.

Words & Phrases

Communication Styles

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶ [He/She] ... | [彼／彼女]は…。 |
| ▶ is a good conversationalist | 話し上手です |
| ▶ includes everyone in the conversation | 全員を会話に参加させます |
| ▶ leaves [himself/herself] out of the conversation | 会話に加わろうとしません |
| ▶ hears what [he/she] wants to hear | 自分の都合のいいことにしか耳を傾けません |
| ▶ cuts people off | 人の話を遮ります |
| ▶ pries into other people's business | 他人のことを詮索します |
| ▶ always sits on the fence | いつもどっちつかずです |
| ▶ always butts in | いつも横から口を出します |
| ▶ Having a conversation with [him/her] is like talking to a wall. | [彼／彼女]には何を言っても無駄です。 |
| ▶ aggressive | 攻撃的な |
| ▶ assertive | 自己主張の強い |
| ▶ confrontational | 対立的な態度を取る |
| ▶ decisive | 決断力のある |
| ▶ overly agreeable | 愛想の良すぎる／調子を合わせすぎる |
| ▶ diplomatic | 如才ない |
| ▶ domineering | [傲慢／支配的]な |
| ▶ indecisive | 優柔不断な |
| ▶ inquisitive | 知りたがる |
| ▶ intimidating | 威圧的な |
| ▶ outspoken | 遠慮なく物を言う |
| ▶ persuasive | 説得力のある |
| ▶ passive | 受け身の |
| ▶ sympathetic | 思いやりのある |
| ▶ passive-aggressive | 受動的攻撃性のある [怒りをはっきりと表現する代わりに、間接的に態度で表すこと] |

Other

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| ▶ rapport | 調和 |
| ▶ posture | 姿勢 |
| ▶ cerebral physiology | 大脳生理学 |
| ▶ nurtured | 養育された／後天的な |
| ▶ multi-faceted | 多面的な |
| ▶ feeble | 弱い／微かな |